

**CONSERVATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

FEBRUARY 22, 2005

PRESENT: James Gage, David Hurley, Jesse Amsel, and Shawn Costello

ABSENT: Glenn Eberly and Walter Moody

STAFF

PRESENT: Reanna Goodreau, Recording Secretary

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Costello called the Ellington Conservation Commission meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

III. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Review of Proposed Age Restricted Cluster Housing Located on Maple Street

Commissioner Hurley recused himself.

Attorney Joseph Capossela, counsel for the developer, came forward to review the proposal. He explained that the 26 acre parcel is located on Maple Street with frontage also on Route 83, but that there would not be any access to Route 83 due to steep slopes. He noted that the applicant is proposing 49 units on 21 acres and that he would be deeding 5 acres to the Town in order for them to construct a senior center. Attorney Capossela stated that the greenspace proposed does not include the 5 acres to be deeded to the Town and that it includes the wetlands and wetlands mitigation areas, the detention basin, and greenspace surrounding the units. He explained that a soil scientist determined that the wetland areas that will be disturbed are low-value wetlands. Tom Savage, developer, noted that a seasonal watercourse ran along the southerly boundary line, as well as an active wetland.

The commission agreed that it would be beneficial if they returned for the next meeting with a more detailed plan showing the exact location of the greenspace and the calculations for the greenspace.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION REQUESTED THAT THE APPLICANT SUBMIT A PLAN DELINEATING THE GREEN SPACE AND PROVIDE GREEN SPACE CALCULATIONS FOR THE 3/29/05 MEETING.

2. Discussion: Joint Meeting with PZC re: Coordination

Chairman Costello stated that he has spoken with Emery Zahner, Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission about coming before the PZC to explain what the Conservation Commission has been doing in regards to open space reviews and fee in-lieu of open space research.

Commissioner Gage explained that the Board of Finance chairman was a strong proponent of a separate line item for \$2 million and also putting \$200,000 in the open space fund for the 05-06 budget. He explained that if the \$2 million bond is approved by referendum, then the \$200,000 would go against the bond for the first year. Commissioner Gage noted that some members were against the proposition because the open space plan is not completed, but others were in favor.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

1. Discussion: Open Space Fee In-Lieu

Commissioner Gage explained that he had done some research with the Ryefield Estates subdivision. He handed out a worksheet that detailed the information from the appraisal and the information that he had researched. Commissioner Gage believes that based on his research, Mr. Gingras bought two lots at \$350,000 a lot, but that the appraisal states that \$350,000 was paid for both lots; he would like clarification. He noted that the PZC reviewed the appraisal and mandated a fee in-lieu based on the \$350,000 paid, but believes that due to this new information, they should require the fee in-lieu based on the \$700,000. Commissioner Gage also stated that the PZC did not accept the appraisal for the Crestwood IV subdivision and increased that fee in-lieu accordingly.

2. Commission Workshop on Open Space Plan

Commissioner Hurley asked if Reanna Goodreau had found out if the commission could use the rest of the 04-05 budget to have a consultant complete the open space plan. Ms. Goodreau stated that the Finance Officer did not see a problem with using the funds to complete the plan, but to get clearance from the First Selectman. The Planner has not gotten a response from the First Selectman.

The commission reviewed the Age Restricted Cluster Housing regulation as it applied to them. They noted that they have not yet received a detailed site plan for these proposals. Commissioner Hurley stated that the commission should be looking at the proposal in its entirety, not just what is being proposed as greenspace. The commission should review the quality of the design and check to see if any important or prominent features, such as a stone wall, are included with the greenspace. They should also look at what the detention basins are going to look like if they are included in the minimum 20% greenspace.

V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes
 - a. January 25, 2005 Regular Meeting Minute
 - b. February 2, 2005 Special Meeting Minutes

MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (AMSEL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE JANUARY 25, 2005 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES AND THE FEBRUARY 2, 2005 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES.

2. Correspondence:
 - a. Memo to Land Use Commissions from Matt Davis, dated 1/28/05
 - b. Letter from State of Connecticut DOT, dated 1/26/05

MOVED (GAGE), SECONDED (COSTELLO) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADD TO THE AGENDA UNDER CORRESPONDENCE, ITEM C: DEED FOR KIMBALL FOREST, PINNACLE ROAD, APN 084-003-0000.

The commissioners reviewed the deed. The chairman stated that CGS 7-131 states if the Board of Selectmen uses open space that is in the open space plan, they would have to replace the land used for non-open space purposes. The commission agreed that they would like to review the plans for the cell tower and give advisory comments prior to the PZC's 8-24 report.

MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (AMSEL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO REQUEST THAT THE FIRST SELECTMAN PROVIDE THE CONSERVATION COMMISSION WITH FUTURE PLANS FOR THE KIMBALL FOREST PROPERTY PRIOR TO THE CGS 8-24 REPORT BY THE PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION.

VI. ADJOURNMENT:

MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (AMSEL) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Reanna Goodreau
Recording Secretary